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Winchester CPA 'Yes on 6' campaign up and running

CHRIS STEVENS | CORRESPONDENT

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The Town of Arlington used some of its CPA funds to restore two of their Tercentenary Markers, including this one of the Jason Russell House. COURTESY PHOTO/COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COALITION

The Community Preservation Act has received approval from stakeholders and Town Meeting members, but it still needs to pass muster at the ballot box and the "Yes on 6" Campaign Committee is taking aim at ma happen.

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Co-chaired by David Miller and Jen Ryan, the committee recently met to give an overview of what the CPA is, answer some commonly asked questions and set out a timeline of work that needs to be done before the Nov. 5 election.

What is the CPA?

Ryan, who is a Town Meeting member and has a wealth of experience with CPA on both the state and local level, admitted explaining what the Community Preservation Act is can be "kind of complicated."

"It's a state law that allows municipalities to raise funds and it's for open space, recreation, historic preservation and community housing," she said. "The local funds are matched by a state trust ... but importantly, it's a community engagement tool that brings communities together to work on different projects. It's a Community Preservation tool that allows us to fund and protect and support the attributes of our communities that can be hard to fund."

The Town of Sunderland used CPA funds to purchase a house, left, and create three new units of affordable housing for seniors, right. COURTESY PHOTOS/COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COALITION

The Price Tag

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Ryan told the 20 or so residents on a Zoom meeting on Aug. 26 that if their neighbors ask what they're voting for this fall, they should tell them it's a 1.5% property tax surcharge that works out to approximately $200 per homeowner and that revenue has a state match that tends to be between 15 and 40%.

"It fluctuates depending on the housing market and also on the amount of money that the Legislature puts into the trust," she said. "But there is a consistent match."

Ryan also noted the CPA can also be used to leverage other funding sources and it can be bonded against.

Does the $200 per year per homeowner price tag fluctuate?

Miller said the 1.5% is fixed, but what could vary is the value of a home and real estate taxes, also the amount of money the state contributes as a match because that depends on how active the housing market is statewide.

"But the rate to you remains fixed," he said.

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After Lowell passed its CPA in 2021, the community used funds to save and preserve Rollie's Fa
farm once owned by the same family for 70 years. While Lowell had once been the home to a variety of

agricultural properties, the woodlands of Rollie's Farm were the very last of its kind in the area. COURTESY PHOTO/COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COALITION

Michael Creane said he felt it was imperative the committee be completely transparent regarding cost and the CPA.

"People are going to be talking and I think it's important that we be able to speak to concerns and answer questions factually, to help people understand that there is a true benefit in the CPA," he said. "Because right now, what I hear ... is a concern that this is an override in sheep's clothing."

What kind of projects are we talking about?

Ryan said CPA funds have or could be used to fund new library windows, Town Hall restoration, to pay for the Lincoln School chiller or to refurbish the Packer-Ellis tennis courts.

"When you're driving around places like Arlington or Lexington, you can see CPA project signs all over the place, and it really gives you a sense of how CPA is used," she said. "Folks can also look at the state CPA website and search out projects and see how it's been spent across the Commonwealth. It's pretty interesting to see."

Miller said people also need to remember the key word in CPA, "preservation." The dollars raised are meant to preserve elements of the community that might otherwise fall under the funding line, he said.

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Several communities, including Arlington, Holyoke, Springfield and Peabody, have used CPA funds for inclusive playgrounds. COURTESY PHOTO/COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COALITION

He called open space and recreation, affordable housing and historical preservation challenging items to fund, yet he considers them important elements of the community.

"So it's important that this pass to help get those things funded and preserve them," he said.

However the money is spent, it is a local decision, Ryan said.

"The local Community Preservation Committee reviews applications and makes a recommendation to Town Meeting," he said.

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In 2019, Billerica realized there was a need to preserve the original articles of incorporation from the 1600's, colloquially known as The Great Deed. The CPA historic preservation funding that year allowed the community to restore the original documents in 2020. COURTESY PHOTO/COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COALITION

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Speaking of the state – here's CPA by the numbers, according to Ryan's presentation

• 196 — number of communities that have adopted the CPA

• 18 — the number of other communities that will be voting to adopt (or not) CPA this fall

• 70% — the number of Massachusetts residents that live in a CPA community

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•$3.4 billion — the amount raised to date for community preservation funding statewide

• 11,500 — the number of affordable housing units created with CPA funding, with an additional 18,000 units supported

• 36,098 — the number of acres preserved with the CPA

• Over 7,100 — the number of appropriations made for historic preservation projects

• 3,700 — the number of outdoor recreation projects carried out under CPA

Canton used CPA funds to preserve the David Tilden House, which is more than 300 years old. COURTESY PHOTOS/COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COALITION

Who else in town supports this?

Ryan said the CPA has garnered support from the Select Board, the Conservation Commission, Council on Aging, School Committee, Field Management Committee, Planning Board, the entire state delegation, Capital Planning Committee, Housing Partnership, Affordable Housing Trust, the Historical Commission and more.

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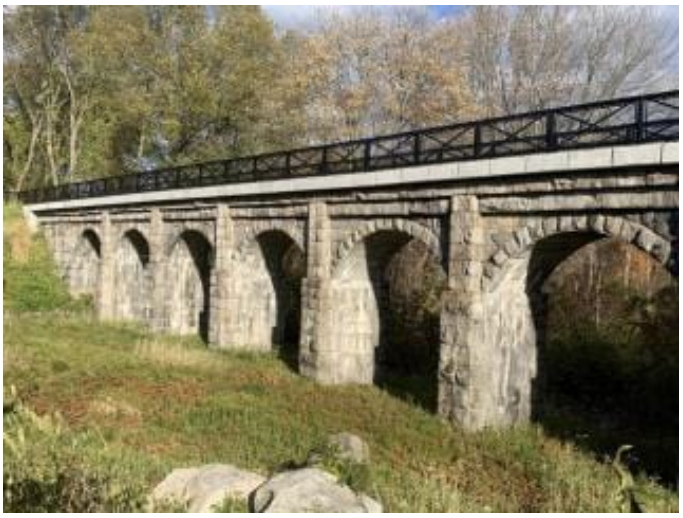
Jason Capodanno urged the campaign committee not to forget about the youth programs. Youth soccer, youth baseball, youth softball, youth lacrosse and the like could all benefit from CPA funding and winning over those groups could make a big impact, he said.

"Because there's a lot of people that could benefit from this over a long term," he added.



Hollison used CPA funds to restore the 8-Arch Bridge, left, and the Upper Charles Rail Trail, 24 miles of non-operational railway land in various states of repair, all connecting the towns of Holliston, Milford, Hopkinton, Ashland, and Sherborn. COURTESY PHOTOS/COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COALITION

Who isn't supporting the CPA?

Will Brand asked if there was an organized opposition to CPA passage.

Select Board member Michael Bettencourt, who is also on the Yes on 6 Campaign Committee, said he was unaware of any formal or even informal opposition to the act.

What are other communities doing?

Nancy Lin suggested there are resources available to compare co
size communities to see what the 1.5% impact might bring Winchester in

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terms of return value.

Creane told her they were already on it. A separate CPA Working group met Monday Aug. 19. They are working out the mechanics of how the CPA would work in Winchester in terms of rubrics and ranking projects.

During that meeting each member, which includes Creane and Miller among others, was given a handful of communities to look at to see how they were implementing the CPA and how it might translate to Winchester.

The group plans to meet every other Monday at 6 p.m. or more frequently if need be.

Boston used $5 million in CPA funds to create a first-time homebuyer program. The ONE+Boston program includes the city's first affordable mortgage product to be created specifically for low- and moderate-income first-time homebuyers who currently live in Boston. COURTESY PHOTOS/COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COALITION

Next Steps

John Suhrbier wondered how the committee would make sure voters actually get to question 6 on the ballot. Five of the questions on the November ballot are state questions that in some cases are controversial. He is concerned people might gloss over the questions altogethe

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Miller said there would be a formal kickoff on Sept. 14 when yard signs and literature would be available. Then on Sept. 21, the group will have a table at Community Organizations Day.

"And you know many of you are welcome to join us at that table and shake hands and pass out literature," he said.

"It's a very short runway with the November election," Bettencourt said. "We have to do a lot of outreach to get folks to the polls and support the ballot question for the Community Preservation Act."

For more information on the Yes on 6 campaign committee, email CPA2024@gmail.com or check out Community Preservation Act Winchester on Facebook.

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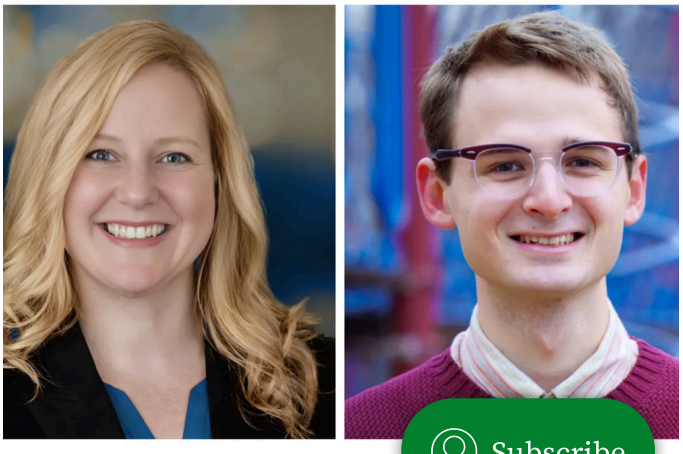

NEWS

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Celebrate Women's History Month with Girls Leading Change

The following was submitted by the Network for Social Justice: To mark Women's History Month and International Women's Day in 2026, the Network for Social Justice is collaborating with club leaders from Winchester High School and members of the Community Health team from La Colaborativa in Chelsea and

March 4, 2026

Winchester School Committee candidates bring contrasting backgrounds to Thursday forum

Two candidates for Winchester's School Committee will face voters at a forum as the district navigates a new literacy curriculum, budget pressures and questions about student mental health. Heather von Mering and John Bellaire are competing for an open seat on the School Committee, which oversees a budget von

WILL DOWD | STAFF WRITER

March 4, 2026

FEATURES

'Chicago: Teen Edition' dances onto the Winchester High School stage

By Talia Ho | Correspondent Fame. Fortune. And all that jazz. This spring, Winchester High School presents "Chicago: Teen Edition," a bold musical that explores celebrity culture, media manipulation, and the cost of ambition. This iconic production is set in the 1920s. Performances will take place on March 13 and 14

SPECIAL TO THE NEWS

March 4, 2026

EVENTS

Ripley Chapel in Winchester presents 'Syldason: You Are Welcome Here'

The following was submitted by the Ripley Chapel at First Congregational Church: On Friday, March 13, beginning at 7:30 p.m., live in-person and live streamed from the stunning Ripley Chapel at First Congregational Church, Winchester, 21 Church St., join in with Syldason, a duo concert featuring Sylvie Zakarian,

March 4, 2026

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